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Property Tax Assistance Available for Veterans' Survivors

OLYMPIA, Wash., Nov. 9, 2006 — Many surviving spouses of veterans have yet to apply for grants that can help them remain in their homes despite rising property taxes, the Washington State Department of Revenue said today.

Grants are available to qualifying senior citizens or the disabled under the Property Tax Assistance Program for Widows or Widowers of Veterans. The grants provide property tax relief in addition to assistance available through a separate property tax exemption program for senior citizens and the disabled.

The Department estimates about 300 people could qualify for grants, but since the program took effect for taxes due in 2006, only 43 people have taken advantage of it, receiving more than \$20,000 in grant funding.

First Gentleman Mike Gregoire, a Vietnam veteran, encouraged spouses to apply for the benefits.

"I am pleased that Washington is taking care of the families of veterans. They deserve our support and gratitude," Gregoire said. "Often times their pension and Social Security benefits are limited, making it even more challenging to pay rising property taxes."

The program requires applicants to be at least 62 years old, own and occupy their own home, and have a combined disposable income of \$40,000 or less. They also must not have re-married, and must be the widow or widower of a veteran who:

- died as a result of a service-connected disability;
- was 100 percent disabled for 10 years prior to death;
- was a former prisoner of war who was 100 percent disabled for at least one year prior to death; or
- died on active duty or in active training status.

More information on the Property Tax Assistance Program for Widows or Widowers of Veterans is available at <http://dor.wa.gov>, by calling program grant administrator Sindy Parshall at (360) 570-5873, or contacting the Veterans' Service Center at 1-800-562-2308.

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